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The National Agricultural Market Information System of Trinidad and Tobago (NAMIS), as a stimulus for development of regional agri-food production and trade

Prakash Ragbir

Manager, Information and Communications Technology. NAMDEVCO

Avenish Ali

Database Administrator. NAMDEVCO

Elbert Johnson

Chief Executive Officer, NAMDEVCO

ejohnson@namdevco.com

Abstract

Availability and accessibility of appropriate information has been identified as one of the major constraints to the advancement of the agricultural sector both locally and regionally. To address this problem, in January 2007, NAMDEVCO launched its National Agricultural Market Information System (NAMIS). This system is currently being used as a tool that provides timely and accurate information to stakeholders in the Agri-food sector thus enabling them to make informed management decisions. The collection methodology employed allows for the collection of wholesale and retail prices and volume information for fresh produce, sea-food, and processed products in over 80 different collection areas throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

To date, NAMIS has proven to be a valuable asset to the agricultural sector by effecting a reduction the price spreads between wholesale and retail, leveling the playing field between buyers and sellers and by identifying areas of opportunity. By May 2009, over 1 million hits have been recorded to the website; an average of 3,000 per month. The Buyers and Sellers Forum have so far accounted for sale of approximately 1.53 million kg of fresh produce among 173 registered users in Trinidad and Tobago; an average of 40,000kg per month.

The system has the potential of becoming the model for market information and intelligence, as well as other forms of advanced markets and trading systems such as e-commerce and commodity exchanges.